

## City of Alexandria, Virginia

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## MEMORANDUM

DATE: OCTOBER 2, 2001

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER *PS*

SUBJECT: AUTHORIZATION FOR GRANT SUBMISSION AND ACCEPTANCE OF GRANT FUNDS FOR PROJECT RESILIENCE, ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY SERVICES BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THE FALLOUT OF THE TERRORIST ATTACKS ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

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**ISSUE:** City Council consideration of the Alexandria Community Services Board's (Board's) application through the State Department of Mental Health Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for funds available through the Crisis Counseling Assistance and Training Program funded and administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

**RECOMMENDATION:** That City Council authorize the City Manager to:

- (1) Approve the submission of the grant application to FEMA in the amount of \$91,145 in funds available for 60 days of crisis counseling services, which includes approximately \$14,803 for reimbursement of activities already performed and underway, and approximately \$76,342 to fund planned activities. Up to ten full-time equivalent temporary outreach workers to conduct disaster mental health crisis intervention will also be recruited; and
- (2) Execute all documents that may be required.

It should be noted that the Board's grant application has already been submitted to the State as one part of a multi-Board submission to FEMA being made by/through the State on behalf of the region. The State will present the entire submission on Friday, October 5. Due to the constrained time line for grant submission, staff submitted the grant application contingent upon City Council approval at its October 9 legislative session.

**BACKGROUND:** After the terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center, the State Mental Health Disaster Coordinator invited five Northern Virginia Community Services Boards (Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax-Falls Church, Loudoun, and Prince William) to prepare requests for funding to enhance crisis counseling services. This funding was contingent on the region being declared a disaster area, as it subsequently was late Friday afternoon, September 21.

**DISCUSSION:** The initial funding is a short-term, 60-day grant which, if awarded, qualifies the awardee to apply for continuation grants for a period of up to nine months. FEMA requires that the State grant submission be made no later than 14 days after the disaster declaration which was made September 21. Therefore, the State's submission would be due to FEMA by October 5. The Alexandria Community Services Board at its September 25 Executive Committee meeting authorized the submission of the grant, which was due to the State on Friday, September 28, so that the State combined submission could meet the FEMA submission deadline of October 5.

The attached status report on Project Resilience, Alexandria Community Services Board's response to the terrorist attacks, outlines mental health crisis services that have been provided to date, as well as a plan for continuation of services that would be funded by the grant. The economic pressures from the closing of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and reduction in tourism may produce a rise in a variety of behaviors, such as domestic violence and substance abuse, which will require assistance.

The grant's proposed plan of services is included in the attached status report. Specifically, the plan for services includes the hiring of ten full-time outreach counselors to work in concert with existing staff. Recruitment and training of individuals from within the Alexandria community, from organizations experienced in outreach activities, such as local churches, volunteer groups and service organizations, will be a priority. These individuals will be temporary employees whose totally federally-funded positions will end with the termination of the grant funding. The grant is restrictive in that it limits the types of activities funded to individual and group crisis counseling services, education services and referrals. The grant specifically will not provide funds for traditional mental health or substance abuse services to existing or new consumers.

We expect to provide the following continued services with the help of added outreach staff:

**Individual and Group Crisis Counseling Services** will assist disaster survivors in understanding what happened, their current situation and reactions, address their needs for support and other services by linking with others who may be able to help them; facilitating support groups and community meetings, working within the schools to discuss disaster-related issues with students, administrators and families; and addressing support and assistance needs.

**Education Services** include creation, distribution and/or presentation of Project Resilience resource information in various media outlets (print advertising, public service announcements, internet, news organizations) on crisis counseling and related topics; mailings and training to service and religious organization personnel.

**Referrals** are key for survivors and others (disaster workers, for example) who may require long-term, more formal mental health care beyond the scope of the Project. Identified individuals will be referred to appropriate services, be they disaster-relief related such as those available through the American Red Cross and others or mental health-related in which case the referral would be to a licensed mental health professional.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Pending acceptance of this grant submission on October 5, 2001, funds in the amount of \$91,145 for 60 days of crisis counseling services would be available. There is no requirement for the City to provide a cash match or an in-kind match for these funds.

**ATTACHMENT:** Project Resilience Status Report

**STAFF:**

William L. Claiborn, Ph.D. Director, Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse

Deborah Warren, Director of Consultation and Education, Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse

**PROJECT RESILIENCE****10/01/01****Status Report*****Background***

Project Resilience is the Alexandria Community Services Board's (ACSB) response to the fallout of the terrorist attacks on September 11. The State Mental Health Disaster Coordinator is working with the Northern Virginia Community Services Boards to apply for FEMA grant money which became available on September 21 when the President declared the area a disaster area.

***Services Provided To Date***

- ◆ Following the terrorist attacks, staff immediately went into high gear to reassure consumers of their safety and help them with their feelings of helplessness, anger and grief.
- ◆ Kim Giles, LCSW, Director of Emergency Services, spent September 11 and 12 at the Pentagon working with the Red Cross to provide emotional support to rescue workers and families of the victims.
- ◆ Four staff debriefings were held. This was critical since many staff needed support and advice about managing consumers.
- ◆ Three large scale debriefings were held the week of September 17 for City employees, public safety personnel, and the public.
- ◆ Two debriefings were held for seniors at senior high rises.
- ◆ Every school received materials on dealing with children and trauma. Counseling staff were available at four "Back to School" nights.
- ◆ Over 206 hours of crisis counseling services were provided by over 20 ACSB staff as of September 28. To make this effort possible, additional staff assumed some of the regular duties of Emergency Services workers. Management provided 109 hours of supervision and coordination activities including regional planning meetings. Cost of these additional services was estimated to be \$14,803.
- ◆ Staff prepared a grant which is due to FEMA on October 5. This grant request is for \$ 91,145 to reimburse the department for disaster-related services already provided and crisis counseling services for 60 days to respond to community's need in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks.
- ◆ Staff are planning to hire 10 outreach workers who will work in the community to provide these services.
- ◆ Staff have met with the Alexandria Red Cross to ensure that there is no duplication of services and to coordinate a series of crisis-related forums targeted to specific groups such as the elderly, veterans, immigrants and refugees and persons who are potential targets of hate crimes.
- ◆ ACSB staff have established 10 groups for families and friends of those who were killed, survivors, families and friends of survivors, families and friends of public safety personnel, and the general public.
- ◆ ACSB staff are providing Critical Incident Stress debriefings to Alexandria public safety personnel.